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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, March 30, 1934.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Easter Ideas." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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You can guess what's on my mind today without my telling you. I'm thinking about Easter -- Easter eggs and so on and also Easter food. Lots to say about both, and this is the day to do it.

Of course, you know that long custom and ancient tradition have made Easter one of the important feast days of the year. Time was when good housewives planned their Easter dinner even more carefully than their Christmas feast. Devout Christians from early times looked forward to this day as a happy ending to a long fast.

The traditional Easter menu always suggests spring -- new, young growing things and fresh spring colors. A color scheme for an Easter meal usually features yellow and white or a delicate green or some other soft pastel shade. Soft colors in contrast to the vivid shades we feature at holidays like Christmas or St. Patrick's Day. As for the foods to choose, here again young, tender, new-season foods have the place of honor. On the list of meats, lamb and veal and chicken usually have first place. Egg dishes are suitable anywhere in the meal. You can serve crackers garnished with chopped hard-cooked eggs with the soup to start the meal. And you can feature any kind of egg dessert at the end of the meal. Among the vegetables, take your choice of tender young greens, asparagus, new potatoes, new green peas, young onions, baby lima beans or even tiny carrots-- all suggesting spring and new growth. Chopped parsley makes a good garnish for many of these spring vegetables.

Of course, the salad at the Easter meal is important for carrying out this springtime idea. Fresh crisp salad greens or an egg salad or a bird's nest salad to please the children -- all these are possibilities.

As for dessert, a lime sherbet or mint or pistachio ice cream will work into a green color scheme, and a frozen custard or a lemon or orange or apricot ice will suit a yellow menu. Little sponge cakes or a fluffy angel cake are ideal Easter cakes, to go with a frozen dessert. A delicate green or yellow fruit gelatin is another possibility. So is lemon pie or lemon tarts. The idea is to suggest spring from the beginning to the end of the dinner.

So much for general ideas. Now for our special menu. Let's have breaded veal cutlet for our Easter meat. Vegetables to go with it? Buttered new asparagus and new potatoes with parsley butter. Then, bird's nest salad. This is a spring salad to please the children. Make the nest of crisp shredded lettuce. Fill it with little balls of cream or cottage cheese mixed with chopped nut meats and

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moistened with French dressing. Shape the balls like robin's eggs using about a teaspoon of cheese for each one. Roll the balls in chopped parsley and arrange in the next. Garnish with radish flowers.

For dessert, let's have frozen custard and angel cake with orange icing. Once more, that menu: Breaded veal cutlet; New potatoes with parsley; buttered new asparagus; bird's nest salad; Frozen custard with angel cake and orange icing.

But here I am spending all this time talking about Easter ideas for grown-ups when really this spring holiday is more of an occasion for the younger generation, the generation that takes Easter bunnies and nests of bright colored eggs seriously, the small folks who enjoy an Easter egg hunt or a game of rolling eggs on the lawn. In many parts of the country such Easter events have come to be yearly traditions. Of course, you've heard of that famous party that takes place in Washington each year when hundreds of young citizens with their baskets come to roll eggs on the White House lawn as guests of the President and his wife.

If you're having an Easter party for the children, probably they'll enjoy an egg hunt as much as any other kind of entertainment. If the weather is too cold or the ground too damp to stage a hunt outside, hide the eggs indoors and have an indoor party. Give each small guest a little basket. Then, at the blow of a whistle, let them start hunting here, there and everywhere -- in partly open drawers, behind books or window curtains, under sofa pillows and other places easy for them to reach. If the children are hunting candy eggs, better wrap the eggs in waxed paper to keep them clean. At the end of the hunt, the child who collects the largest number of eggs wins the prize -- maybe a fluffy rabbit or some other Easter gift.

Like other entertainments for youngsters, an egg hunt may be a happy or an unfortunate occasion, according to how the grown-ups in charge plan and manage it. If the small folks stay up past their bedtime, lose sleep, get too tired or have too much excitement, and if they eat too many candies and other sweets between meals and lose their appetites for regular meals -- well, then the party can be checked off as a total loss. But a carefully planned egg hunt can be more fun at the time -- and afterward. The young guests can arrive in the late afternoon for games and an egg hunt. After that they can have a simple supper at a gay table all dressed up to look festive. The menu will contain their regular simple foods, not too much sweets nor too much hearty food. Sweets will come after the meal. Each youngster will save his basketful of candy eggs to eat when supper is over. That's the kind of merry party that means lots of fun and no grief to follow.

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